

- Public sector management; and
- Sustainable financing of coastal management programs.

## SELF-CIRCULATION: IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR LIBRARY?

**Barbara Butler**

Oregon Institute of Marine Biology

**ABSTRACT:** This poster describes some of the options available for patron assisted circulation within libraries and discusses the cost of each option. Some innovative suggestions for small or one-person libraries using an OPAC are also included.

Marine laboratory libraries are usually available to their patrons 24 hours per day, but the hours during which staff are available to circulate library materials can be quite restrictive. At the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, a branch of the University of Oregon Library system, we found it politically advantageous to make use of the main campus online public access catalog circulation module. The marine laboratory library is now treated as a branch library rather than simply a departmental collection. Online circulation systems may also be of use for resource sharing because a borrowing library would be able to check the circulation status of an item.

There are several ways in which self-circulation can be implemented. In the case of OIMB, we make use of an Innovative Interfaces Incorporated OPAC to supplement patron-assisted checkout, which is done with the use of circulation cards. Presently, patrons write down the barcode of the item they are checking out. When our system is fully operational, they will use a checkout card in a book pocket that carries a duplicate barcode. With this system, patrons need only sign their name.

In developing our self-circulation system we considered three options (circulation computer and barcode reader are already owned)<sup>1</sup>:

### Option 1:

- Use III self circulation module and a self-check unit from 3M and duplicate barcodes if necessary
- Cost: \$16,000-28,000<sup>2</sup> depending on options, and the cost of implementing the III self-circulation module.
- Pros/Cons: Unlike a public library where most users have identical privileges, University libraries may have many different patron types. University of Oregon estimates that 1 in 3 patrons require some sort of intervention on behalf of staff and

self-circulation results in no savings in staff time. This option also assumes that the appropriate security detection system is in use. Cost was prohibitive.

Option 2:

- Have patrons sign out a book using a manual system and duplicate barcodes.
- Cost: Assuming the patrons use circulation cards to check out material, items would need duplicate barcodes. Costs would include the purchase or rental of a barcode duplicator. Barcode duplicators can be rented for as little as \$262 per month and can be purchased for \$1324<sup>3</sup>. A local public library has undertaken a barcode duplication project and has found that volunteers can process 100 pieces per hour.
- Pros/Cons: This setup is fairly streamlined and it gives you the flexibility of circulating materials to visitors who may not have a patron record in your OPAC. The down side is that this does take staff time both to implement and maintain.

Option 3:

- Have patrons sign out a book using a manual system and duplicate barcodes with simple technology such as photocopies of barcodes.
- Cost: No immediate out of pocket expense is required except for supplies on which to copy duplicate barcodes.
- Pros/Cons: This type of project can be done as time permits but may be more susceptible to human error and is more labor intensive than a barcode duplicator.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Information on barcode readers can be obtained from any library supply catalog.

<sup>2</sup> Information on 3M self-circulation modules was obtained from Rod Veitz 1-800-328-0067

<sup>3</sup> Information on InData barcode duplicators was obtained from Julie Conklin 1-800-798-9403